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# 'Spy Dust' Used in Soviet Union Is Harmless, U.S. Officials Say

*Envoy Protests Subjecting Americans to 'Outside Substance'*

By Gary Lee  
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, Feb. 14—Extensive tests by U.S. officials have proved that the chemicals the United States says the Soviet Union uses to track the movements of American officials here are harmless, according to a statement released by the U.S. Embassy here today.

The conclusion allays fears that arose in Moscow's American community last summer when U.S. officials here and in Washington first raised the possibility that the tracking powder, familiarly called spy dust, might cause cancer.

Several chemicals, including nitro phenyl pentadiene, or NPPD, and luminol, are used "against a specifically targeted, relatively small percentage of official American employees," the embassy statement said.

The employees affected "have contact with Soviets," U.S. Ambassador Arthur A. Hartman told reporters, but he declined to identify them further.

Hartman said in a press briefing, "We want to make clear to the Soviet authorities that active measures against Americans in Moscow are not acceptable." He added, "It's unacceptable to subject Americans to any outside substance."

Soviet officials in Washington were informed of the conclusions, Hartman said.

Last August the U.S. government protested that Soviet agents were using NPPD on door handles and in cars to trace the movements of U.S. officials.

The Soviet Union flatly denied the charges. Soviet officials described the spy dust accusations as an attempt to poison U.S.-Soviet relations before the summit meeting last November.

The tests, conducted by officials from three U.S. agencies, revealed that "exposure to the quantity of NPPD found does not pose a health hazard," and that even if it enters the body there is little or no retention after 48 hours.

Researchers from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control came to the Soviet Union in August and September.

After the spy dust problem was identified in August, visiting EPA staffers inspected the homes, cars and offices of 20 percent of the Americans living in Moscow and Leningrad. Altogether, they sampled 418 surfaces. But no traces of the chemical NPPD were found, the statement said.

Hartman, dissatisfied with the results, ordered another inspection last month, which resulted in traces of NPPD being found in five vehicles used by U.S. employees. The chemical appeared to have been sprayed into the vehicles, Hartman said.

Hartman said the research process resulted in a more simplified way of detecting the substance, which was previously only possible with the use of a mass spectrograph.

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE A1NEW YORK TIMES  
15 February 1986

## U.S. Says 'Spy Dust' Used by the Russians Is No Health Hazard

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14 — The United States said today that the powdery chemical apparently employed by Soviet authorities to track Americans in Moscow had been used against only a handful of diplomats and "does not pose a health hazard."

The statement, issued by the State Department and by the United States Embassy in Moscow, seemed to end an episode in which the Reagan Administration announced with great fanfare that the Soviet Union was suspected of using a carcinogenic agent against Americans in Moscow.

### Glowing 'Spy Dust'

The chemical agent, nitrophenylpentadienyl, or NPPD, quickly became known as "spy dust." Many Americans in Moscow became alarmed because at the time of the public disclosure about the chemical last August, the State Department suggested that the agent might cause cancer.

Because of the negative findings, reporters asked if the Administration had exaggerated the problem last August when it announced that Soviet authorities in Moscow had been trying to track Americans by applying an almost invisible powder to their clothing, cars, doorknobs and other objects. The "spy dust" reportedly glowed under ultraviolet light. At the time, the United States said it was making a protest "in the strongest terms."

In response to questions about exaggeration, a senior State Department official said: "Absolutely not. We felt it was better to be safe than sorry, and had an obligation to our people in Moscow to make public what we knew and to make sure that the Soviets stopped it. We had to alert everyone, and it made no sense to try to keep quiet about it while trying to conduct scientific tests. We were aboveboard about this from the start."

Charles E. Redman, a State Department spokesman, reporting today on the six-month study, said: "We have conducted extensive tests on this tracking agent. Test results indicate that it has not been used indiscriminately against American personnel but has been employed by Soviet authorities against a specifically targeted, relatively small percentage of official American employees.

"Fortunately, the results of those tests show that exposure to the quantities of NPPD found does not pose a health hazard," he said.

As a result of tests, Mr. Redman said, the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences "concluded that exposure to NPPD, particularly at the very low levels found in Moscow,

does not carry with it any known health risk."

The research showed, he said, that the chemical "will not cause cancer in exposed persons" and does not cause birth defects when applied to the skin of laboratory animals.

When the State Department disclosed Aug. 21 that a mysterious powdery substance had been used by the Soviet Union to track the movements of Americans in Moscow, American officials said there was concern that the "spy dust" was a mutagen, a substance that could cause genetic change, and therefore might have the potential to cause cancer.

Mr. Redman, who was the spokesman last August, said then that "we have protested the practice in strongest terms and demanded that it be terminated immediately." The Soviet Union denied what it called "the absurd allegations" made in connection with the chemical.

Today, Mr. Redman said, a report on the American findings was submitted to the Soviet Embassy in Washington. The United States, he said, continues "to object to the use of chemicals against U.S. personnel."

In August, the United States said it had known of the use of NPPD since the mid-1970's, but had become particularly concerned because of evidence in recent months that the chemical was being used more than in the past.

Tests taken last month in Moscow detected samples of the chemical on five cars of American Embassy personnel, Mr. Redman said. He said it was not possible to tell if the chemical found last month had been the result of "dusting" last year or was a sign of continued activity.

### 'Unacceptable,' U.S. Envoy Says

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Feb. 14 — The United States Ambassador in Moscow, Arthur A. Hartman, said today that he had ordered a second series of tests for the chemical last month after an investigation last summer found none.

Mr. Hartman said that "I insisted that we go back for a more pointed sample."

The second series of tests, concentrated on vehicles used by American diplomats, detected traces of two chemical substances, neither of which was found to be a health hazard.

The second chemical found, the report said, was luminol, which is used in an alkaline solution for analytical testing in chemistry. The embassy statement said that luminol did not appear to be dangerous to humans, and that American authorities were asking scientists whether further tests on this chemical were necessary.

"It is unacceptable," Mr. Hartman said, "to subject Americans in Moscow to any substance that is not present in the general environment."